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AUTHOR Heinrich, K. T.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This project examined the experiences of mid-life, female doctoral students from a feminist perspective, focusing on their development of personal and scholarly "voice." An 18-month project, entitled "Doctoral Study as Heroic Journey," was both a cooperative inquiry and a curricular innovation that involved an experiential workshop and four reunions during which the workshop experience was evaluated. Ten culturally diverse female doctoral students in education and nursing ranging in age from the middle thirties to middle fifties participated in the project. Extensive excerpts from the transcripts of the reunions are presented to show the challenges and experiences that the women faced as students, focusing on the three phases of their journey--awakening, initiation, and transformation. The project found that initiation into the scholarly identity was a psychological, emotional, relational, and spiritual, as well as, an intellectual experience for the participants. (Contains 29 references.) (MDM)

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Mid-life Women Doctoral Students Recover "Voice" in a Community of Scholarly Caring

"Women's Voices Heard: Change in the Academy, Paper Presentation, AERA Annual Meeting, Chicago, March 24, 1997

K.T. Heinrich; A. Rogers; A. Taylor & Rhoberta Haley

ED 409 760

Introduction

Doctoral programs in nursing are proliferating across the country and women in mid-life are enrolling in these programs in record numbers (Carpenter & Hudacek, 1996; Sikes, 1996). After reviewing the educational research literature, Beeler (1993) concluded that doctoral study is for many "an excessively painful rite of passage" for which an "indefensible human price is exacted". For mid-life, women, doctoral students in nursing and education doctoral programs, this "human price" is sometimes paid in the currency of "loss of voice". On the basis of her research with a national sample of 200 women who completed their doctorates after age 35, Debra Sikes (1996) concludes that mid-life women may either find their voice or lose it in a "sea of masculine thought" during doctoral study. Since they often assume leadership positions after graduation, it is a significant loss to the professions when these women's mature voices are lost or even temporarily silenced.

Larry Dossey (1997, March/April) writes, "If our medical schools are to produce healers, they must first stop destroying them. Let's expect them to prepare the soil in which healing can flourish and from which healers can flower." So, too, if our doctoral programs are to produce passionate scholars, they must first stop destroying them. How do we prepare the soil in which mid-life women's voice can flourish and from which passionate, women scholars can flower? Sikes (1996) suggests that doctoral women need women mentors to "help them rediscover and reclaim their feminine power, their creativity and intuition" (p. 18). Until now there was nothing in the literature that described how they might do this.

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During the cooperative inquiry discussed in this paper, mid-life, doctoral women participants reclaimed their feminine power through accessing their creativity and creating a network of mentoring relationships within a community of scholarly caring. This project actually fostered the development of "authentic voice" and nurtured "passionate scholarship" in a group of mid-life women doctoral faculty and students. The design, findings, and implications of this feminist, co-operative inquiry will be shared in order to engender a dialogue among conference participants about developing communities of scholarly caring between graduate faculty and students in their own programs.

Background

This project grew out of the conviction, grounded in our lived experience and in the extant research (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1989; Carpenter & Hudacheck, 1996; Heinrich, 1995; Heinrich, 1991), that mid-life women will not lose their voices if supported by women mentors during doctoral study. As a faculty member in a doctoral program, Kathleen was oversubscribed and had little time to devote to mentoring. Anita, then a doctoral candidate, and Kathleen pondered the enigmatic question, "How can women's voices be recovered and sustained through 'wo-mentoring' (Allen, 1994) when women mentors in doctoral programs are so few in number?" Based on recent research that indicates that women form their identities within relationships (Fedele & Harrington, 1990; Haring-Hidore, 1991; Surrey, 1991) and establish networks of "peer mentors" (Haring-Hidore, 1991; Heinrich, 1994), we suspected that membership in a mentoring group (Heinrich, in press) might help doctoral women recover personal voice and develop scholarly voice. Therefore, we designed an educational experience that supported the development of scholarly voice by creating a community of mentors among a group of mid-life women including one doctoral faculty member, a group of student facilitators, and student participants.

Since both doctoral study and mid-life are considered initiatory rites-of-passage (Estes, 1993; Chinen, 1992), the metaphor of the heroic journey as initiation seemed doubly fitting for mid-life, women doctoral students. Therefore, this project was shaped around Noble's (1994; 1990) definition of the female hero and the stages in the heroic journey. Although the hero is traditionally considered a masculine archetype (Jung, 1967; Campbell, 1988) , feminist psychologists are urging women to create "a new female hero myth that teaches us to claim, not suppress, the power of our femininity and to perceive ourselves as the heroes of our own lives and the authors of our own stories"(Noble, 1994, p. 13). Noble (1994) says a female hero, "belongs to herself alone; she must be the center of her own world. Fusing the best attributes of femininity and masculinity [she is]: autonomous within interconnected, interdependent; and equal relationships; nurturing without denying or sacrificing her own needs" (p. 193). According to Noble (1994) there are three stages in the heroic journey: 1) an awakening during which there is a breakdown of an old life pattern and a call to the adventure of living life differently ; 2) an initiation that involves a decision to embark on a journey of self awareness that includes naming gifts, finding allies, facing dragons, and completing initiatory tasks; and, 3) a transformation to a more profound depth of self and involvement in the world.

Design

Co-operative inquiry involves four phases: "1) co-researchers agree on an area of inquiry and identify some initial research propositions; 2) the group then applies these ideas in their everyday lives; 3) the co-researchers become fully immersed in this activity and experience; and, 4) the co-researchers return to consider their original research proposition and hypotheses in light of experience" (Reason, 1994, p. 326).

This eighteen month project entitled "Doctoral Study as Heroic Journey" was both a cooperative inquiry and a curricular innovation that involved an experiential workshop and

four reunions during which the workshop experience was evaluated. Ten, culturally diverse, women doctoral students ranging in age from the middle thirties to middle fifties (5 from education; 5 from nursing) participated in the study. They were drawn from all matriculated students involved in doctoral coursework in the schools of nursing and education at a private, comprehensive university in the southwestern United States.

We gathered a group of five, culturally diverse, mid-life women interested in doctoral study to co-create this workshop experience. The workshop was held in a peaceful, aesthetically pleasing, comfortable setting with food and drink always available. Grounded in feminist pedagogical principles, the workshop experiences were dialogic and process oriented. Expressive methods that enabled participants to access their "feminine" sides through exercises that united mind-body-spirit and right-and left-brain, e.g. journal writing, guided visualization, dance, and artwork. During the weekend workshop, we as group facilitators experientially involved the participants in reviewing their "heroic" doctoral journeys. Data were gathered in the form of participants' journal writing, videotaped group discussions, and art work in response to 7 questions: 1) what do I want from this workshop; 2) what are my gifts; 3) what was my call to adventure; 4) who are my allies; 5) what are my initiatory tasks (things that must be done to obtain degree); 6) who are my dragons (obstacles along the way); and, 7) what have I gained from this workshop?

All group discussions from the workshop and reunions were videotaped and transcribed verbatim. Given the multi-focused richness of three data sources in this study, our understanding of these expressive products varied depending upon our vantage point. Therefore, "crystallization" as Richardson (1994) describes it--a central image for "validity" in post-modern texts that allows for the intertwining of mixed genre--allowed us to view the journals, videotaped group dialogue, and artwork from various perspectives. Offering logistical and technical support during the workshops and reunions, Rhoberta and Ann joined us as co-researchers during the data analysis phase of the project.

During reunions, emergent themes surfaced from the qualitative data analysis of the workshop were shared, negotiated, and refined through "hermeneutic dialectic"--acknowledging all points of view--among participants and facilitators. This process was both educative and empowering and consonant with the feminist perspective on both pedagogy and research. The emergent nature of this research design allowed flexibility for this project to be lengthened from one semester to a full year time period (see Figure 1). When only half the data were analyzed during the first reunion, participants and co-researchers agreed to meet for a second reunion. Participants requested a third reunion. During that reunion the co-researchers presented a formal research paper describing the "heroic journey" project to elicit participant feedback and to ensure faithful representation of their lived experience.

Findings

The longitudinal nature of this eighteen month project allowed us to trace the development of scholarly voice in a group of mid-life women as recorded in their journal entries, art work, and videotaped group dialogue. The words and artistic images of one participant excerpted from the workshop and subsequent reunions will serve as an exemplar case to illustrate how her uncertain "voice" matured into a strong, scholarly voice in this group of doctoral women. This woman will be referred to as "Sun" since she drew the image of a sun on the cover of her journal an identifier that protected her anonymity. The two other participants who dialogue with Sun will be referred to as Bird and Dolphin.

Check-In is defined as a "time for the group to hear each individual. Check-in usually opens the gathering to assure that concerns of everyone present are fully integrated into the discussion" (Wheeler & Chinn, 1991). During check-in on the first day of the workshop, Sun shared with the group:

I hope I can put my time and energy into building a network with other doctoral students. I haven't really gone out of my way to call anyone to try to meet or to get support and on the way home last night I was thinking why that was. There were two reasons. I took Kathy's class summer before last and I realized I had no solitude in my life and so that's been my goal to try to have some alone time away from work and other people and I think that path took me away from spending time with other doctoral students. And I also realized last semester that my life was so full I really hardly had room for the doctoral program and I've been whacking back some space. It made me realize last night I need to spend some time on that because it's very valuable to me and hopefully my company would be valuable to other people.

Later that day participants were asked to respond to the question, "What is your dragon?", obstacles along the path of the heroic journey, by creating a mask from the art supplies provided. Sun described her mask and dragons in this way:

My dragon , it's truly within my self. I think it's really my own voice. She represents my own voice in the sense that she has stars in her eyes and she has vision and she has great potential and she's kind of a bit like a Las Vegas show girl being very proud. Inside there was something that was good about her except for the fact that she had these warts. And I wanted something that wasn't overwhelmingly ugly but that does make it difficult at times to get through and if you look close enough you see she even has hair growing off of it. That's really my inner voice, it's not with me all of the time. It's not overwhelming but it's like a wart and it can be really very unattractive and really downtrodden and that's what I struggle with.

During the first reunion, check-in, Sun reflected on her spring semester in response to the question, "What have the last four months been like for you in the context of the heroic journey workshop?"

> This has been academically a really hard term for me because I've been taking a course overload, so it's a lot of work but I made it through somehow. I feel like I've survived and what happened to me in January in this group was that I realized how empowering that weekend was. And I came to realize what had happened here was that sense of connection and the energy that it had given me. I've made more of an effort in my life to maintain more of a sense of connectedness which is something I didn't have here, having moved and not knowing anybody and putting all my efforts really into graduate school and not really focusing on friends. So I've made more of an effort, and I feel more connected. Since January I really haven't felt lonely which was really quite a profound change for me cause over the last year and a half I had lots of times when I really felt profoundly lonely. I'm making a home here for myself.
>
> I feel like the doctoral program really put me into a lot of change and rethinking about myself. I feel like this term I've really started to come back together again. My ideas are becoming clearer and I'm almost clear about who I am and where I'm going. So this has been a positive time. I feel a lot stronger, clearer, and connected.

During check-in at the second reunion, Sun shared:

> I think I'm a lot better. I think last term almost killed me so I'm sure I'm a lot better. And I finished all my coursework now and started on my dissertation and it's changing which was a little difficult for me to accept. It's evolving. But I think actually that's good, I'm really happy with the

direction in which it's going. I'm feeling pretty good generally. I'm structuring my time. And I'm making more of an effort to do stuff outside of school and keep in touch with friends. Just last week I started attending a women's support group, life's really good. I fell into a slump in July... But I'm doing okay, things are clearer and moving.

Noble (1994) suggests that facing initiatory tasks, like the qualifying examination, brings dragons into clear view. The second reunion was the first time that dragons were described and owned fully and in this slice of dialogue, Bird and Sun discussed one of Bird's dragon.

Bird: You know for me one of the things that I've discovered I'm taking back is my cultural piece. I remember at the workshop that I made the mask. I've always gone back to that mask, I have it in my lingerie drawer so I look at that mask everyday. I have come to grips with something I didn't know about myself. When we talk about dragons, the dragon of prejudice and racism, and my own reluctance at times to acknowledge my cultural heritage because of the prejudice and racism I have seen experienced by other people. And now you're talking about your intense desire to work with the homeless, Dolphin. I have this incredible desire to work with Hispanics, Spanish speaking women.

And for me going through doctoral education I've discovered is a way to gain white privilege. But as I gain white privilege, how do I not lost my identity, how do I not take on the predominant, white values and turn around and try to socialize other students into the white, privileged class without practicing the same type of racism. I am here under a fellowship full-time and the primary reason is that I'm Hispanic. It's hard because I have this because of the color of my skin.... If I wasn't brown and Hispanic, would you be offering me this fellowship?

Sun: Any fellowship is given under certain criteria, I mean how would you feel if they gave you this money because you're smart?

Bird: I probably would feel better about that because I do think I'm smart.

Sun: But you also think you're Hispanic.

Bird: I'm coming to grips with that. That's part of dissociating myself from that group, having to pull away from that group and not identify. But the day I drew that mask in this group, that was a real obvious way of taking something out of here and putting it in front of me to look at. You're half brown and half white. How are you going to bring those two together? And it was the start of a tremendous process.

In responding to the question posed during the third reunion, "What have you gotten from participating in this project?", Bird, Sun and Dolphin discussed how they'd grown as individuals within the context of the group:

Sun: I wanted to share this. Looking back and being here today makes me realize just how much I've done. And if it hadn't have been for this project I wouldn't think that. I would think I was 6 months behind rather than looking and saying how far I'd come.

I will be leaving April 1. And I hope to have most of my data collected by that time. It's been a very interesting process for me, last fall in particular. I think I had to confront a lot of the stuff that was holding me back. That perfectionism, the inability to hand in drafts, not being a work-in-progress. And dealing with my committee as people as opposed to gods. I feel like I've really matured and grown in the process. And I'm going to finish this. I see that very clearly, there's no doubt in my mind. And move on. A friend wrote me a note, "Soon-to-be Dr. S."

Dolphin: I shared myself intimately and I think when we're open to that it makes our relationships at a different level.

Sun: A much better level.

Bird: I would agree with that because you have time. I wrote that in my journal that what this did for me is it gave us a time to stop and connect with each other in a whole different way. And when we would run into each other on campus, there was this instantaneous connection and that was wonderful because the journey is so doggone solitary. To know that you just say hello and it's there. And I'm not by myself any more.

Following the third reunion, Sun wrote in her journal:

> The project has also provided me with evidence of my personal and professional growth. Upon reflecting on our first meeting a year ago I can recognize how much I have grown and acknowledge the amount of work accomplished. Without this project I would tend to denigrate the achievements of the last year. So, thank you, the colleagues on this hero's journey who helped me to see myself as a hero.

Since Sun returned to her home state to complete her dissertation, she did not attend the fourth and final reunion.

Discussion

What does Sun's story tell us about the mid-life, doctoral women's lived experience? Sun's story is archetypal of the women participants who recovered personal voice and developed scholarly identity within this group of faculty and students that grew into a community of scholarly caring over time. In describing the hero's journey for women, it is as if Kathleen Noble (1994) wrote the script for Sun's story. The three phases of the heroic journey--awakening, initiation, and transformation--fit Sun's doctoral journey and, by extension, the participants' experience in this group. This is not surprising

since doctoral study is one the few initiatory, rites of passage remaining in our culture. The fact that participants are at mid-life, another rite of passage, serves only to heighten the relevance of the heroic journey as a metaphor for these women.

The two most salient themes that emerge from Sun's story are discussed below: 1) individual development into scholarly identity; and, 2) scholarly identity formed within a community of scholarly caring. The implications of reframing doctoral study as a rite of passage for the role of doctoral faculty as initiators and recommendations for fostering communities of scholarly caring grounded in these findings are explored.

Individual Development Into Scholarly Identity

The quest for self is the central task of mid-life and Sheehy (1995) found that this quest almost always manifests as "a desire to go back to school" (p. 233) for mid-life women. Over time Sun realizes that she entered doctoral study not only for a degree, but to find the voice she lost, to recover her sense of self. She says, "We're talking about mid-life here. This search for self reflects our age." Participants gradually become aware that their entry into a doctoral program is a call to a quest far more profound than a solely intellectual endeavor. Another participant stated, "Doctoral study is a legitimate front for my spiritual quest."

This cooperative inquiry is unique in exploring mid-life women's experiences as doctoral students WHILE actively engaged in doctoral programs. The longitudinal, prospective design of this project makes it possible for the first time to identify a developmental schema that traces the personal transformation into scholarly identity for these women. As Sun's story illustrates, participants' scholarly development begins with the recovery of personal voice. In essence, the awareness spawned during the workshop that they have lost touch with their voice is a catalyst for participants to recover their personal voice and develop an authentic sense of self which, in turn, stimulates them to a

deep desire to identify their "own work" and fashion a dissertation topic that takes the form of "passionate scholarship" (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Developmental Schema of Women's Personal Transformation from Loss of Voice to Scholarly Identity.

WORKSHOP----------R E U N I O N S

Loss of Voice---------Recovery of Voice--------Authentic Self---------Scholarly Identity

"Do my own work"

Passionate

Scholarship

We came to understand that for these mid-life women, the recovery of personal voice precedes initiation into scholarly identity. Their recovery of voice seems to be intricately connected with the way in which the workshop and reunions are designed--feminist pedagogical exercises grounded in feminist psychological principles. This nurturing took physical form of an aesthetic setting and abundant and appealing food and drink, expressive approaches including the opening ritual, journal writing, group discussions, and from the metaphor of the hero's journey that introduced the metaphor of initiation. The expressive methods that allow Sun to reconnect with her inner feminine help her to stay connected to that feminine essence after the workshop. Bird wrote in her journal:

> "The weekend was a good blend, especially the arts/crafts activities to break away from the group and find another way to express oneself. The candle ceremony every day was wonderful and I light my candle at home each day to keep me centered and to draw on the group experience."

As Sun "reclaimed feminine power, creativity and intuition" (Sikes, 1996) within the support of a community of scholarly caring, she finds her "passion" in developing her identity as a scholar through the vehicle of her dissertation research topic. Her research is "passionate scholarship" since it is substantive scholarship that acknowledges diversity (Du Bois, 1983; Meleis, 1992) and is responsive "to the social and humanitarian goals of society" (Du Bois, 1983). Typical of passionate scholarship, Sun is deeply committed to bettering the lives of the women she is studying.

Scholarly Identity Formed Within A Community of Scholarly Caring

The path to scholarly identity is, as all initiations are, long and arduous for Sun. As she underwent each rite of passage linked with doctoral study, Sun strengthened her sense of "self" and continuously sought connection with other women. During this study, participants recovered voice in two ways, through a reconnection with the inner feminine and membership in a community of scholarly caring. Not only was self-reflection engendered by expressive methods like journal writing that rekindled participants' connection with their feminine aspect. But feminist pedagogical approaches fostered collaborative mentoring relationships within a community of scholarly caring.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes (1992) underlined the intimate connection between being taught by an "older woman" and initiation for women:

> But, for women, there are additional archetypes of initiation that rise out of women's innate psychology and physicality; giving birth is one, the power of blood is another, as are being in love or receiving nurturant love. Being given the blessing by someone she looks up to, being taught in a deep and supportive way by one older than she, all these initiations have their own tensions and resurrections." (p. 324).

During the initial workshop, participants and researchers come to care about each other as individuals. Over the course of the reunions, these personal relationships are

cemented. As they progressed through the initiation of doctoral study, these women came to share resources and mentor one another in their scholarly pursuits. The diversity of this community of scholarly caring served to enhance participants' sharing and connectedness. Bird observed that, "We've been enriched by the women from the schools of nursing and education. The cultural diversity of us is really beautiful and it wasn't planned, it just happened. It's good this was not only done for one school." At the final reunion, the participants defined their community of "scholarly caring" (Meleis, Stevens & Hall, 1994) as a "an on-going group of faculty and students who care about each other as individuals and about each other's work as scholars" that continues to this day. Characteristic of communities of scholarly caring, these "collaborative mentoring" relationships involved "negotiated relationships, mutual interactions, facultative strategies, and empowerment" that created a "culture for scholarly caring" marked by "mutual interactions that demonstrate solidarity in the pursuit of scholarship (Meleis, Hall & Stevens, 1994, p. 179).

Implications for Doctoral Educators

While the literature suggests that women mentor other women in developing a scholarly voice, the reality is that women mentors are rare in doctoral programs and research shows that women can lose their voice during doctoral study (Carpenter & Hudacheck, 1996; Sikes, 1996). When doctoral study is viewed from the perspective of an initiation, mid-life women's loss of voice during the doctoral years, represents an, "initiation gone awry, the hostile conditions do not serve to deepen, only to decimate. Another venue, another environ, with different supports and guides must be chosen" (Estes, 1992, p. 264). The difficulty of finding new venues, environs and guides is that the "matrilineal lines of initiation--older women teaching younger women--have been fragmented and broken for so many women over so many years" (Estes, 1992, p. 264).

Estes (1992) suggests that women reconstruct the steps in initiation through extant metaphors borrowed from myths.

During this study, the myth of the hero and the metaphor of the heroic journey became the group's initiator. Revisioning doctoral study as an initiatory journey offered participants a map to guide their travels on the uncertain path to scholarly identity. A different "venue and environ", formed during workshops and reunions, emerged from the integration of feminist process and expressive methods that allowed participants to "reclaim feminine passion, creativity, and intuition" (Sikes, 1996). Along the way obstacles were reframed as dragons and initiatory tasks were transformed into challenges. The metaphor of doctoral study as a heroic journey transformed the role of the doctoral faculty member into that of initiator. Facilitators and participants became "new supports and guides." By forming a network of mentoring relationships, facilitators and participants re-established the matrilineal line of initiation by nurturing one other's passionate scholarship.

Revisioned Role for Faculty-Initiators. The most salient finding to emerge from this study was that initiation into scholarly identity is a psychological, emotional, relational, and spiritual, as well as, intellectual experience for these mid-life, participants. Rather than a radical overhaul of doctoral programs, these findings suggest a way to reframe the role of a select number of women, faculty members to make doctoral education more age- and gender-sensitive for mid-life women. This role is best described as faculty-initiator. In traditional initiations representatives of the community guide a group of initiates through the rite of passage. Pinkola Estes (1992) says that to initiate others into a new identity, one must be fully initiated oneself.

Applying this analogy to doctoral education, a faculty representative, who is fully initiated into the identity of doctor, could guide the initiation of groups of mid-life doctoral women students into the new professional identity of doctor. Based on recent research (Heinrich, in progress), to be fully initiated into doctoral identity takes about five years after graduation. So initiated, faculty-initiators would be mid-life women at least five years

out of their doctoral programs. Conscious of their own struggles with mid-life and with solidifying a doctoral identity, these faculty-initiators would be able to serve as guides for mid-life women doctoral students during each phase of the quest. Based on the finding that initiation into doctoral identity for these mid-life participants transcends the purely intellectual, doctoral faculty-initiators would design curricular innovations that attend to the psychological, emotional, relational, and spiritual aspects of mid-life participants. These teaching strategies are emerging not only from feminist pedagogy, but from the interface between education, psychology, and spirituality. Educators are beginning to borrow insights from the counseling and psychology literature (Robertson, 1996) and psychotherapists are developing programs that Maureen O'Hara calls "psychospiritual education" (Gottlieb, 1997). As collaborative, mentoring relationships sustained within the group context were particularly meaningful for these participants' scholarly identity development, faculty-initiators would be skilled in group facilitation. They would then be able to guide groups of mid-life doctoral women through the initiatory process of integrating the doctoral identity over time.

In this study, the hero's group became a safe place to express the full range of feelings related to pursuing a doctoral degree. This freed Sun and her heroic sisters to work with doctoral faculty outside the group on the intellectual tasks necessary to complete the degree. Since many doctoral faculty are most comfortable dealing with students around the purely intellectual aspects of doctoral study, there are probably only one or two faculty members on any given doctoral faculty who meet the criteria for faculty-initiators. If these few, faculty-initiators shifted their emphasis from mentoring individual students to creating networks of collaborative mentoring, they would find their mentoring influence broadened and their own connection to a community of scholarly caring professionally gratifying.

The developmental schema for individual scholarly development that emerged from this longitudinal study provides a preliminary framework for doctoral faculty initiating mid-

life women into scholarly identity. The implications for this revisioned, faculty-initiator role will be described during the three stages of the heroic journey.

Doctoral Study As A Mid-life Quest. Faculty-initiators can anticipate that some mid-life women enter doctoral programs with a tenuous connection to their personal voice. For such women, entry into a doctoral program may well be connected to a mid-life search for identity (Sheehy, 1995). Through a collective experiences that nurtured the inner feminine by integrating feminist pedagogical approaches and artistic, expressive methods, this research project helped participants reconnect with their personal voice. These findings suggest that it is within the purview of faculty-initiators to develop curricular innovations similar to the experiential workshop in this study that foster scholarly identity formation by reconnecting mid-life women students with their inner feminine essence.

Fostering Initiation Into Scholarly Identity Through Group Meetings. Participants' formation of scholarly identity was a gradual metamorphosis supported by the mentoring relationships that developed within the group over an eighteen month period. In part, personal and authentic voice were sustained and scholarly identity developed with the on-going support of reunions scheduled every four months. This schedule offered a place for participants to reflect on their individual, doctoral journeys and allowed for the group to grow into a community of scholarly caring. The timing of the meetings enabled participants to retain personal responsibility for resolving their own issues. Held often enough for participants to share their experiences, the meetings were infrequent enough that participants could not become dependent upon the group for solving their problems.

Mentoring Transformation Into Passionate Scholarship. In this study, participants' individual transformation into scholarly identity meant translating a personal passion into dissertation research. As initiators, doctoral faculty and dissertation advisors have the challenging task of nurturing and being "mid-wife" to (Belenky, et al., 1986) the delicate inspirations that form the basis for passionate scholarship. In the case of Bird,

only one of her committee members was aware of the personal significance of her research. The on-going support she received from Sun and the hero's group enabled her to face her own prejudice toward her cultural heritage and undertake research with Latina women. After the heroic project formally ended, Kathleen and a number of the heroic women continue to support Bird's passionate dissertation scholarship. Since the final reunion, Bird had to replace a dissertation committee member who was not carrying her weight; is learning to draw boundaries with an intrusive friend who is studying a topic similar to her own; and, had to terminate a position that threatened her ability to complete her dissertation within the time frame she envisioned. Support of the original ideas for passionate, dissertation research was just the beginning. Sustained support during the challenges associated with bringing passionate scholarship to fruition was just as important.

These findings challenge faculty-initiators to design on-going, group experiences in which faculty and students nurture and mentor each other's personal, authentic, and scholarly voices. This carries the hope that passionate dissertation scholarship will flourish among doctoral women.

Recommendations

Participants recommended that, "this workshop should be annual and a must for all new students especially. Be sure to include other students at various stages of doctoral study". Since not all students may want to participate, we encourage faculty-initiators to create elective, curricular innovations for interested, mid-life women participants. Recommendations based on this study for shaping these experiences include: 1) be cognizant of the mythic dimension of doctoral study as a quest for self in the mid-life woman; 2) use the metaphor of "rite of passage" to reframe the role of faculty into that of initiator; 3) consciously foster "communities of scholarly caring" in which faculty-student groups mentor one another throughout the course of doctoral study and beyond; 4) when

designing curricular experiences for mid-life women students, use feminist pedagogical approaches that honor feminine psychology by attending to both creative and relational dimensions; 5) transform these curricular innovations into research and evaluation projects that expand body of educational research and ground curricular innovations; 6) conduct longitudinal studies that explore mid-life women experiences throughout the doctoral years and follow them after graduation; and, 7) establish a new matrilineal line of initiation by socializing faculty into the roles of initiator and collaborative mentor.

Conclusion

With increasing numbers of mid-life women doctoral faculty and students, there is hope for establishing a matrilineal line of initiation within doctoral programs. As educational researchers, we hope that the description of this project and Sun's transformation into scholarly identity will inspire doctoral educators to establish a matrilineal line of initiation by becoming new guides. In order to do this, the notion of the individual mentor needs to be extended to "group as mentor" (Heinrich, in press). This approach to mentoring both stretches the reach of the available mentors and also helps doctoral women learn to create networks of collaborative mentors among their colleagues. By designing new venues and environs that allow faculty and student colleagues to collectively nurture scholarly identity, mid-life, doctoral women's wise voices will be expressed through passionate scholarship that enriches our disciplines.

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